WAGNER

AND

THE REFORM OF THE OPERA.

E. DANNREUTHER.

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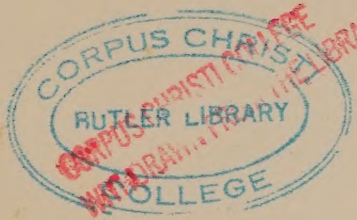

WAGNER.

SECOND EDITION, REVISED

WAGNER

AND

THE REFORM OF THE OPERA

BY

EDWARD DANNREUTHER

"*L'art attend avec impatience une impulsion organique, susceptible à la fois de régénérer sa propre vitalité, et de déployer ses eminents attributs sociaux.*"—A. COMTE, 6, 273.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THIS little essay illustrating some of Wagner's tendencies and theories, made its first appearance in 1872 as a series of articles in the *Musical Record*. In the following year, Messrs. Augener having acquired the copyright, it was issued as a pamphlet. Long out of print, it is now re-issued with the more important sections slightly expanded at the expense of some superfluous matter. The biographical data given in the sixth section have been augmented upon the original lines; but those interested in such things are recommended to refer to the more complete details to be found in the article on Wagner by the author in Grove's Dictionary of Music, and particularly in Mr. W. Ashton Ellis's biography now in course of publication. Mr. Ellis's fine book is based on Glasenapp's "Life," of which it is a translation considerably expanded.

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WAGNER.

"L'art attend avec impatience une impulsion organique, susceptible à la fois de régénérer sa propre vitalité, et de déployer ses eminents attributs sociaux."—*A. Comte*, 6, 273.

EVER since the first performance of *Tannhäuser* at Dresden in 1845, Richard Wagner has been the best-abused man in Europe. In England, where a genuine curiosity has only of late arisen, concerning the problems mooted by Wagner, it may be well to make an attempt at elucidating them.*

There are three facts to which nearly all the pen-and-ink quarrels concerning Wagner can be traced. First, that he published his criticisms and theories at a time when his later works, by which alone such theories could receive their sanction, were hardly, if at all, known, and but inadequately performed; secondly, that the social and political heresies, which he propounded by way of clearing the air and finding free-breathing space for his

* Here and elsewhere such words as now, of late, at the present time, must be taken to mean *circa* 1870.

artistic ideals, frightened people; and thirdly, that he now and then thought fit to point his moral by ruthless attacks on living men of repute—Meyerbeer, for instance.

No one can have failed to observe that Wagner's theoretical opinions form a comment to his productions. There can be no greater mistake than to suppose that Wagner wrote his music-dramas in accordance with any preconceived theory. He groped his way, as men of creative impulse always do, from instinctive production to a complete mastery of means and ends. His theories and his practice grew together; if anything, the former is a result of the latter. Wagner is a poet and a musician —dramatic poet first, dramatic composer second—and his case differs from that of his predecessors only in that he has given a more minute account of the mental fermentation which preceded and accompanied his works. That he has done this entitles him to the thanks of all those who know a poet to be something different from a mere funnel through which the gods pour beautiful thought. He possesses—in common with Goethe—the gift of becoming conscious of mental evolution, and of being able to

give, as it were, an outsider's view of his own acts. This adds immensely to his power. He speaks at first hand, and talks of nothing but what he has himself seen or felt. In his case there is no filtration of other men's ideas, no pouring of other men's thoughts from phial to phial. It was the conflict between his artistic desires and the existing means of realising them which for a time tormented him and paralysed his actions, and thus, perforce, drove him to criticism. He groped his way through a maze of speculation concerning the musical stage and its elements—mimetics, music, poetry—from which, after a long search, he emerged with his insight strengthened and his productive powers intensified.

"Kunst und Revolution" (Art and Revolution), "Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft" (the Art-Work of the Future), and "Oper und Drama" (the Opera and the Drama), Wagner's principal critical and theoretical works, were written and published between 1849 and 1852, when he was banished from Germany, and had no chance of seeing the effect of his novel efforts on the stage. They raised a stormy controversy; ingenious critics contrasted his theories with his operas—the

later Lohengrin and the earlier Rienzi—pointed out plentiful contradictions, and pronounced both to be the outcome of an ill-balanced mind. Some asserted that he was a mere charlatan, who invented plausible theories to cover musical impotence; others that he was a musical genius led astray by metaphysical will o' the wisps; others, again, held him up as an infuriated madman, who would tear down existing art fabrics, and plant himself on the ruins as "a god of the future." In England, since about 1870, when "The Flying Dutchman" was produced, there has been a reaction in Wagner's favour, which has ended in complete triumph.

The clearest expression is that which finds no sphere worthy of itself, and makes one, as Walt Whitman has it.* In the case of a man who, like Wagner, surrenders himself without reserve to all impressions which touch him sympathetically, the impressions will be more or less strong according to the strength of his receptive power for the moment, and he will feel compelled to communicate them to others, as soon as he has received more than

* Preface to the first edition of "Leaves of Grass."

he can contain. In two directions, says Wagner, a surcharge of this sort can flow forth, just as it happens to be the result of impressions from past and contemporary art alone or of impressions from Life superadded to these. In the first, a direction which Wagner calls "the feminine," may be found poets, painters, and especially musicians. "Artistic impressions absorb their receptive power so completely, that impressions from life, coming later, find its capacity exhausted." "Musicians often live in an atmosphere in which art deals with itself, sensitively withdrawing from contact with actuality—in which art looks upon life as an antagonist, and holds an attempt to embody it to be unbecoming and fruitless." In the other direction, "the male, the creative direction," as Wagner calls it, the power of receiving impressions from life is not by any means weakened, but rather, and in the highest sense too, strengthened, by the previously developed artistic power.

To Wagner at his birth the gods gave two gifts—a capacity to receive and to retain the most varied impressions, and, as he phrases it, "*der nie zufriedene Geist der stets auf neues sinnt*" (the never

satisfied spirit that ever seeks new things). So long as an artist has no desire to soar above the atmosphere of a school, he knows what is required of him; he finds forms ready to his hand, and repeats well-known things in well-known ways, as well as, or it may be better than, his predecessors. But where is there a *school* of dramatists or musicians connected with the drama that has sufficient vitality to satisfy a man of high aspirations?

Wagner's activity as a theorist and critic was a mere passing phase — after his *magnum opus*, "Oper und Drama,"* all later contributions to literature, though of considerable importance, are but *hors d'œuvres*. In early youth he produced works for the concert room and the stage, some of which met with a fair degree of success (various overtures, a symphony in C major, etc.). As he developed, and his destination for the lyric stage became apparent, he felt the theatre, as it then existed, to be insufficient for his purposes, and so, almost in spite of himself, he became a critic and theorist.

It will be found that most deviations of

* "Beethoven" and "On Conducting" excepted.

opinion on art matters depend upon those fundamental conceptions of life which artists accept with or without examination. Wagner, in his earlier days, before Schopenhauer's philosophy had matured his notions of men and things, nourished himself enthusiastically upon Ludwig Feuerbach's optimistic views; he was ready, with Feuerbach, to look upon the idea of God as the shadow of the soul of man, to find the kernel of religion to be "man pure and simple," and to see in art the final flower of mundane things. He looked upon what he calls Drama as the only adequate artistic expression of Humanity; and the novel conditions under which he conceived it possible to realise a dramatic expression of human things that shall expand together with humanity, form the main content of his theoretical efforts. In "Kunst und Revolution," and especially in "Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft," his gyrations round this centre of Drama are of enormous width, but in "Oper und Drama," in the "Brief an einem Französischen Freund," in "Deutsche Kunst und Politik," and "Ueber die Bestimmung der Oper," the circles contract into more man-

ageable limits, and he aims at comparatively direct and practical ends. The trouble with these theoretical works, which, as has already been said, must be regarded as comments upon his efforts at original creation, is that they can hardly bear compression; for the most part they need elucidation, illustration, and translation into more readily comprehensible phraseology.

"In ancient Greece both the inner and the outer life of the Democracy was shadowed forth in the union of the arts on the tragic stage; and the sense for beauty and proportion, for high thought and action, and for perfect expression of these embodied in tragedy, reacted upon both the form and the spirit of Greek national and individual existence."* Wagner connects the rapid decay of the Greek drama, which occurred directly after its wondrous successes in the hands of Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and its subsequent spreading (or it may be expansion) into various branches—rhetoric, sculpture, painting, music—with the diminution of political and individual liberty, and the decline of the Greek states. He lays stress on the point that the different

* Wagner condensed.

arts in separate and isolated cultivation, however much their powers of expression have been increased since the Renaissance, could never, without degenerating, replace that all-powerful work of art, the production of which had only been possible by combined effort. Resting upon the doctrine of eminent German art-critics — such as Lessing in his Researches concerning the limits of painting and poetry—Wagner arrives at the conclusion that each branch of art, when developed to the full extent of its capabilities, cannot overstep these limits without incurring the risk of appearing incomprehensible and fantastical; and, for illustration and proof, he points to the aberrations of Berlioz and his disciples — Liszt included — where music tries to accomplish what poetry alone can do, or to the latest French operas *à la Meyerbeer*, where it tries to construct something like a drama out of its own means. It appears to him that "each art as soon as it has reached its utmost limits, demands to be joined to a sister art, and, what is more, will be ready to forego its pretensions to accomplish that which lies beyond its natural sphere."

His hopes for the spiritual leadership of the Arts in the future are based, on the one hand, upon the idea of social regeneration, and, on the other, upon the extraordinary development Music has undergone during the last three centuries. The wonderful and apparently limitless capacities for emotional expression Beethoven has given to music open vistas of dramatic possibilities such as, according to Wagner, the ancient world could never have conceived.

His problem then, or rather the problem of the art-work of the future, as he calls it, is this: how can the scattered elements of modern existence generally, and of art in particular, be united, so as to form an expression of the whole? This is the first question. And secondly: would such a work, if created and accepted, give any hope of raising social and individual life to a higher level than our present industrialism?

Wagner, standing on Beethoven's supreme achievement as a symphonist, tries, from a musician's point of view, to do certain things for the drama in which neither Goethe nor Schiller succeeded, though their ideals lay in the same direction — *i.e.* to make the drama independent of preponderating

intellectual motives and elements, and so to construct it that it shall appeal directly to the emotions without much verbal exposition. It is hardly necessary to add that such a thing can only be attempted with the aid of music—music with its full power of emotional expression. And it is this feat of leading the stream of Beethoven's music into a Dramatic channel, so that it shall fulfil and complete the intentions of a poetical dramatist, that constitutes the principal act of Wagner's genius.

The importance of a form of art, such as is here shadowed forth, can hardly be over-rated. Free from the restraint of Nationality, it can become universally intelligible. In music we possess the requisite equalizing power which, resolving the language of intellectual perception into that of feeling, makes possible communication of the innermost intuitions; more especially so, if such communication can, "by means of the plastic expression of a dramatic performance, be raised to that distinctness which the art of painting has hitherto claimed as its exclusive privilege."

II.

"Weh! Weh!
Du hast sie zerstört,
Die schöne Welt,
Mit mächtiger Faust;
Sie stürzt, sie zerfällt!
Ein Halbgott hat sie zerschlagen!
Wir tragen
Die Trümmer ins Nichts hinüber,
Und klagen
Ueber die verlorne Schöne.
Mächtiger
Der Erdensöhne,
Prächtiger
Baue sie wieder,
In deinem Busen baue sie auf!
Neuen Lebenslauf
Beginne,
Mit hellem Sinne,
Und neue Lieder
Tönen darauf!" *Goethe, "Faust."*

To show the weakness and inadequacy of that dramatic caricature the *Grand Opéra*, no better illustration could be found than a Parisian performance of Meyerbeer's *Robert le Diable*, a work wherein the possibilities of operatic good and evil are fully developed. The influence exercised by the operatic stage upon modern music generally, and even upon symphonic music, where there is apparently no chance for

any such influence, may be and often is underestimated. But it is just the phenomenon observed in opera, of supremely beautiful passages surrounded by a host of trivialities, that has opened Wagner's eyes to the possibilities of perfection such as may be attained by a just combination of the dramatist's art with the best music.

The real question is not one concerning the relative capacity of this or that composer for the invention of characteristic melodies to be sung upon the lyric stage, but rather concerning the *form* in which it is thought necessary to embody such melodies. In the works of every musician who has left any trace of his existence we meet with beautiful and expressive phrases. But whilst the symphony, the quartet, and the sonata have been so greatly enriched and enlarged as to make one of Beethoven's symphonies, sonatas, or string quartets, appear like a flower-crowned plant that has reached its ultimate perfection and stands revealed complete in all its beauty, the narrow and puerile forms of dry *recitative* and *aria*, the main props of operatic music, are to this day as weak and as barren as they were at the outset.

These conventional forms, the *recitativo secco* and the *aria*, have imposed their fetters upon every composer who has approached the stage, and have hampered every poet who has attempted to furnish a dramatic poem for music. Even Goethe, who, like Lessing and Schiller, was theoretically inclined to expect good results from the opera, felt constrained to place himself on a level with the *genre*, and to produce puerilities such as "Erwin und Elmira" and "Jery und Bätely," Singspiele, so called, for music. "*Ce qui est trop sot pour être dit, on le chante.*"

Let us glance at the historical development of the opera, as Wagner sketches it in "Oper und Drama." With the Greeks the drama was the direct fruit of the instincts and the belief of the democracy. The Middle Ages, too, had a curious kind of dramatic art; and it is easy to point out in the miracle play and its concomitants traces of a combination of poetry, mimetics, and music. But not in the miracle play or in anything else emanating directly from the people can we look for the roots of the opera. It was in Italy that the upper classes of society first began to

encourage professional singers to sing Airs —*i.e.* people's songs *minus* the naïve charm of real Folksongs. For such airs special verses were written, and a sort of dramatic framework was contrived, with a view to giving them an appearance of connection.

The *solo cantata* is the true mother of opera; the more rapidly the *aria* came to be a basis for the display of vocal agility, the more distinctly it was the poet's business to rest content with the concoction of the necessary number of verses to be sung. It is due to their facility in this direction that Metastasio, Romani, and other clever writers of "words for music," mainly owe their position. They were the humble servants of musical conventionalities, and maimed and distorted whatever of poetical originality they may have possessed on that Procrustean bed of *recitativo secco*, *aria*, *scena*, *finale*.

Later on, for the sake of variety, the *ballet* was added to the dramatic cantata. Here, again, the tune was as much an outcome of the people's dance as the *aria* was of the folksong; and again it was an obsequious playwright's business to combine the two and exhibit them as best he could—

which was an awkward task. The only chance for effecting a union was to make use of the musically recited monologue or dialogue—*i.e.* the *recitativo secco* in some form or other.

Thus, up to Weber and Wagner's time, the three factors of opera, Recitative, Aria, and Ballet, were determined once for all, and have undergone no organic transformation, though one of them, the Aria, has been turned to account in various ways, and has suffered many changes of fashion. And, inevitably, the dramatic outlines supplied by the poet remained undeveloped. Based, for the most part, on Greek or Roman fable, as reflected under the wigs of Rococo worthies, such outlines were put to use by many musicians, and thus it came to pass that certain libretti were set to music over and over again.

Much has been written about the dramatic revolution so triumphantly accomplished by Gluck. It is difficult to see that it can have consisted in anything other than what Wagner describes it to be—a revolt against the supremacy of vocalists, and an attempt to place music in direct *rapport* with the

sentiment expressed by the words, with the character of the persons singing, and even with the peculiar accents and inflexions of the language used. Gluck consciously and on principle turned the vocalists into spokesmen of his dramatic intentions. His merit lies in the fact that, musically, he grasped these intentions with a passionate grip, and gave theoretical expression to them in the prefaces to the scores of his French operas. But as regards the musical *form* of his expression—and this is more important than the degree of warmth and artistic fire with which he accomplished his task—Gluck left things just as he found them. Airs, recitatives, and dance tunes, each exist separately in his works, just as with his contemporaries. His operas are conglomerates of more or less fine pieces of music, rather than organisms of which a distinct dramatic action is the kernel and music the last and the most powerful means of expression. Gluck's French librettists, clever people one and all, were more than ever his *très-humbles serviteurs*. They translated the masterpieces of the Louis XIV. tragedy into the jargon of the *opéra*.

All that can be achieved in the musical

drama, without taking the poet into consideration, was achieved by Gluck's noble successors, Cherubini, Méhul, and Spontini. They widened the musical forms; they maintained the traditional arrangement of the *scena* and *aria*, but they rendered the recitative and the connecting links between it and the aria more expressive; they allotted the airs in accordance with dramatic needs, and in consequence the character of monologue hitherto essential to opera was got rid of. Of course, duetti, terzetti, and other *ensemble* pieces had been in use long before their time; however, the fact that they rendered these, which had formerly been but slight modifications of the solo aria, subservient to the higher purposes of dramatic musical ensemble, was the real progress made; "and it would be difficult to answer these great men, if they asked in what respect we had improved on their mode of musical procedure." Cherubini, Méhul, and Spontini, allowed more liberty to their librettists as their own musical power increased; yet with them, also, a librettist was never allowed to rise above the position of a subordinate.

It may seem strange that nothing has so

far been said about Mozart, "the most gifted and the most musical of musicians"—he whose power and fecundity left a mark on the history of music in all its branches, and whose greatest efforts towards its development are to be found in his operas.

Mozart, Wagner asserts, was perhaps less inclined to attempt innovations resulting from critical reflections than any musician before or since. Yet it is in the opera, where in point of form he gives us so little that is new, that we meet with his most distinctly original utterances; creations which are superior to his best instrumental pieces. And this is the very point that proves the essence of the matter under consideration.

Mozart produces his best music wherever and whenever the playwright gives him a good opportunity. Possessed of the subtlest instinctive knowledge of the nature of his art, Mozart knew that music is an art of expression only, of the truest and most perfect expression, still of expression, and of nothing else. He could not compose poetical music if the poetical groundwork was null. He could not write music for *Titus* equal to that of *Don Juan*, for *Cosi fan tutte* equal to *Figaro*. Good music he always wrote, but

beautiful music only when he was inspired. His inspiration certainly came from within, but it never shone so bright as when it was kindled from without. Wagner has repeatedly asserted that Mozart, with his supreme instinct for the essentials of music and the essentials of the actor's art, might have solved the problem of a true musical drama; but, as it was, he only gave the fullest expression to the airs, duets, and ensemble pieces which his librettist handed to him. He showed the puissance of music as a means of expression far better than Gluck, and better than any of Gluck's contemporaries; yet, in the main, he also left traditional operatic forms as he found them.

Weber, the high-spirited, in the long course of his services as conductor at Prague and Dresden, made a practical analysis of operatic melody. He perceived, almost instinctively, that such melody is in the first instance based upon popular song, and in his endeavours to reanimate it, he was tempted to take up the folksong of Germany, and to transplant it bodily into his operas. The predominance of long-drawn, joyous, yet tender and

melodious phrases, as distinguished from the short and incisive rhythms peculiar to Polish or Hungarian music, is the special characteristic of German folktunes. One cannot fancy popular German songs of the 18th century and later without some sort of accompaniment. They are usually sung in at least two parts, and one is tempted to complete the harmony by adding the bass or a middle part. Whatever chance of excellence a dramatic poem might possess that could by any possibility be expressed by means of such melody was safe in Weber's hands; but we have only to glance at *Euryanthe*, his most ambitious and in some respects most beautiful work, to see how he tortured himself, and tried in vain to express what could not and would not chime with his favourite type of melody; and where Weber failed who shall hope to succeed?

So far we have dealt with the serious aspect of the matter; let us now glance at the frivolous side. With Rossini, and in an increased ratio with his successors, the history of the opera is the history of operatic *melody;* as Wagner has it, "naked, absolute, ear-tickling melody, which we sing and whistle without knowing why; which we exchange

to-day for that of yesterday, and forget again to-morrow, for no reason whatever; which sounds melancholy when we are amused, and joyous when we are disgusted; and which we hum *à propos* of anything and everything." Take Rossini's operas all in all, Il Barbiere and Guillaume Tell excepted, and you have numberless melodies, here and there of a very effective sort, but little beyond. Rossini's intention appears to have been no more than to pour forth multitudes of tunes, such as are fit to be whistled and sung by one and all. If he now and then produced a powerful dramatic effect, one hails it as something unexpected. Dramatic and poetic truth, and all that makes a stage performance interesting, is sacrificed to tunes. The task of the composer of Italian opera, after Rossini, came to be little beyond that of producing variations on one fixed type of *aria* for this or that particular singer or set of singers. With the advent of Rossini, the miscellaneous frequenters of the opera became the sole arbiters of artistic reputation, the ultimate court of appeal in questions of artistic excellence, their taste the guide, and their favourite purveyor of tunes the autocrat of the entire show.

According to Wagner, the opera ends with Rossini's Guillaume Tell. It was virtually at an end as soon as the principle that easy-going melody was the main factor in dramatic music, and that the loosest connection of one operatic tune with another represented musical form, had been accepted in practice. Auber and Meyerbeer made experiments in melody. Auber listened to the Couplets and Contredanses danced and sung by his compatriots (*i.e.* the *can-can*), added melodies from Italy and elsewhere thereto, and served them up intact. The enormous success of La Muette de Portici (Masaniello), a work which marks an epoch on the French operatic stage, and one in which Auber takes a flight far higher as regards effect and originality of musical treatment than in his productions for the Opéra Comique, tempted Rossini to take a leaf out of the same book. Thenceforth Masaniello and Guillaume Tell were the centres round which the operatic world gyrated until the coming of Robert le Diable, who "danced awa' with them both." Meyerbeer screamed what Rossini and Auber had whispered, and, turning his gifts and wide experience to

account on purely commercial principles, managed to oust them. Instead of sympathy with the inflexions of any particular tongue, which he did not possess, he had acquired the knack of "setting" every European language — *i.e.*, of drowning its cadences in the shallow but noisy stream of his music. He studied the scores of Berlioz, that virtuoso of the orchestra with whom the works of Beethoven brought forth such strange fruit: and, taking Rossini's melodies as a starting point, he managed to concoct the most unpalatable musical phenomenon of the day—a kaleidoscope of eccentric effects—his *Grand opéra*. On his banner was inscribed *la caractéristique—i.e.* the trick of disguising rather facile melodies in a garb that shall appear significant. A performance of Robert le Diable presents a queer conglomerate of effects—the most ethereal and the most violent—the most far-fetched and the most commonplace—refinement and vulgarity, sensuality and religion—"*Wer vieles bringt wird Manchem etwas bringen und jeder geht zufrieden aus dem Haus*," as the Director puts it in Goethe's Faust. In an eloquent peroration towards the end of the first part

of "Oper und Drama," Wagner, after having spoken of Meyerbeer's specific musical gifts and set them down as comparatively insignificant, speaks in warm terms of certain moments of fine dramatic effect in Meyerbeer's works—fragments, for instance, of the love-duet in Les Huguenots, and, particularly, of the melody in G flat major towards the close of it. "Let us not forget," he adds, "that this and similar passages occur only where the poet has supplied genuine poetical motives."

But besides being "characteristic," operatic melody, so says Wagner, became "historical." Are not our chorus-people, he asks, dressed in all manner of historical costumes, with decorations to match? Does not the theatrical tailor reproduce both cut and colour with scrupulous exactitude? What matter if the music be dull, so long as its get-up passes for historical?*

To resume, Gluck tried to speak correctly, intelligibly, and expressively in terms of music; he never disfigured a verse for the sake of musical development, and he rendered whatever emotional elements he found in his texts as completely as possible.

* Wagner condensed.

Mozart spoke "with the perfect rectitude and *insouciance* of the movements of animals, and the unimpeachableness of the sentiment of trees in the woods and grass by the roadside." * Give him dull stuff, and he will make it presentable in musical guise; give him a genuine dramatic situation imbued with genuine feeling, and he will return it ennobled and intensified. The closer one looks into Mozart's operas, the more one can distinguish underneath them the suggestions and outlines furnished by the poet. Without such outlines, the best part of them would never have been written. Unhappily, the occasional union of Musician and Poet remained without regular issue and had little influence on the course of operatic development. Rossini's cry was "Melody, melody"; and Weber's opposition to him was directed more against the frivolity of the melody than against the fatal antagonism of musician and librettist. In fact, the charm of Weber's own melody made a still greater autocrat of the musician, and Weber thought himself in the right when he forced Frau v. Chezy, who wrote the book of Euryanthe for him, to change and

* Walt Whitman.

change again—nine times over, she asserts —not only details of verse but characteristics of the *dramatis personæ* and the motives for their actions. In the failure of Euryanthe, which Weber lived to see, we can convince ourselves, better than with any other of his works, that his twofold aim, "absolute melody"—melody which shall be sufficient in itself—"and dramatic expression which shall be true and just throughout," is irreconcilable.

Wagner concludes the discussion by asserting that one or the other, absolute melody or the drama, must be sacrificed. "Rossini threw the drama overboard; Weber tried to construct it by means of his melody, and failed." Music ought not to attempt "characteristic, dramatic, or historical harlequinades." "*We are therefore constrained to admit the incapacity of music unaided by other arts to construct the drama out of its own means, and to assert that music must forego part of its pretensions, and in case of dramatic necessity merge its individuality in the drama.*" *

* These words are not exactly Wagner's words, but their sense.

III.

"Omnes artes, quæ ad humanitatem pertinent, haben quoddam commune vinculum et quasi cognatione quadam inter se continuantur." *Cicero, "Pro Archia Poeta."*

When a poet, painter, or musician appeals mainly to the imagination, purity and singleness of purpose are a primary requisite. If too many, or heterogeneous, means be employed, the imagination will deviate from the central point, and the impression will be blurred. But a dramatist in Wagner's sense appeals not so much to the imagination as to the *immediate sensuous perception*, and here an intimate union of arts, poetry, music, mimetics, painting, is intelligible, for it speaks to all our perceptive faculties united. It should, in justice, be borne in mind that Wagner always speaks and thinks of the play acted, as of a symphony played; both are alive only during the time of actual production, and should be judged as they then present themselves, and not as they look on paper.

It has been stated that operatic composers with high aims, such as Cherubini, Spontini,

Weber, did not and could not realise their aspirations, and that the cause of their failure may be sought in the weakness of the *genre* called opera; and we have been led to assume with Wagner that his ideal — a genuinely *musical* drama—cannot be attained otherwise than by a change in the relative position of its principal components. We have seen that music, when it aspires to drama, must come close to poetry; and that, as the supreme art of emotional expression, it must avoid overstepping the boundaries of the task it is so well fitted for—the task of evolving flower and fruit from the seeds furnished by poetry. On the other hand, "Dramatic poetry may hope to find salvation in a closer union with music, and it would seem to be a fact that the tendency of the entire development of the drama since the Renaissance is to effect such a consummation."

Both in the form and the matter of post-Renaissance plays, the influence of two factors can be traced; first, the mediæval romance, with its descendants, the romantic legend and the novel; secondly, and as it were accidentally, the Greek drama, or rather the formal essence thereof, as

abstracted by Aristotle in his Poetics. Take on the one hand Shakespeare, whose plays are for the most part dramatised stories; and on the other Racine, who in a way approaches the Greek drama—nothing appears so strange in mediæval poems and romances as the chaotic superabundance of matter. Who can trace the changes of time and place, or keep account of the maze resulting from the activity exhibited? There is much charm in such display of exuberant fancy, and the secret of it lies in the fact that a mediæval poet could afford to let his fancy run riot, since he appealed solely to the *imagination*. But the desire for concentration of materials was sure to be felt sooner or later. It has resulted in the condensation of the novel into the play. Yet though the matter presented by an Elizabethan play may be more condensed and compact than the romances or chronicles from which it is taken, there still remains the fact that in everything that concerns *mise en scène* the play appealed to the imagination only — as, for example, in Shakespeare's historical plays. A board, with an inscription easily changed, and a curtain, occupied the place of our elaborate

coulisses, and thus left room for a vast amount of acting matter.

When in the 18th century it was thought advisable to revive Shakespeare, the public had become so accustomed to decorative accessories that it appeared expedient to intelligent actors—Garrick, for instance—to alter the plays so as to suit modern requirements. Scenes which did not appear indispensable to the plot were omitted; others were condensed or joined together. Against such practices protests have been launched again and again. Unanswerable from the point of view of literature they have little weight with the actors, who point to their stage experience and stand firm. The dilemma appears to offer but two ways of escape. Ludwig Tieck, the German poet, proposed the most obvious one—to restore Shakespeare's stage with board and curtain bodily—and this was actually done at Berlin, but, like all radical restorations of bygone customs, proved a failure; the other is that which has been in the main adopted on the English and German stage—the paraphernalia and the machinery which form an integral part of a Grand opéra were brought into play to realise the sudden and

frequent changes of scene. Here, then, we are treated to as much reality as is attainable on the stage, but it is a reality far less real than that which holds us captive when we *read* Shakespeare ; *then* our imagination performs what is required of it with ease, whilst the mass of operatic decorations only tends to bewilder, much as the mediæval romances bewilder with superabundance.

The Italians of the later Renaissance did not dream of trying to make use of popular stories. They took their stand on Aristotle. And it was found convenient to observe Aristotle's rules concerning the unity of place and time. Enthusiasm for the poets of antiquity in the mind and heart of Italian *illuminati* was far too strong to allow anyone to dream of dramatising Romances. Even if it had appeared desirable to make some use of them, how could their matter have been condensed to admit of Aristotle's unities ? It was thought expedient and wiser to annex Greek myths and stories, and to look at them through Roman glasses.

The Italians of the Renaissance, and the Frenchmen of the time of Louis XIV. after them, remained imitators of antiquity. Their

dramatic productions show the stamp of artificiality. Racine's tragedies are the exact opposite to Shakespeare's plays. Racine's art is rhetorical rather than dramatic; it supplies motives for action without the action proper; it gives the will without the deed; the speech upon the stage and the action behind. The instinct of musicians soon prompted them to turn Racine's rhetoric into musical phraseology, to translate his *tirade* into *aria;* and it is not too much to say that French tragedy of Louis XIV.'s time reached its goal in Gluck's opera.

Shakespeare, if he had witnessed the elaborate scene-shifting with which his plays are now performed, might have been induced to try further condensation of the acting matter, just as time and action of the mediæval play had been condensed by his predecessors and himself, and he might have discovered what Schiller and Goethe saw in the course of their dramatic experiments—that, under modern stage conditions, legendary and historical romance is difficult to deal with. It is an interesting question as to whether Shakespeare would or could have done what the Greeks did—dramatise myths.

Wagner answers it in the affirmative, and endeavours to show that *mythos*, in which the poetic perceptions of a whole race are so concentrated as to receive their most palpable and intelligible expression, is the best material for the ideal drama he has in view. It will be necessary to return to this point later on.

Poets contemporary with Goethe—and later, who watched the progress of the drama, with intent to test their powers in it, were compelled to take their choice of two alternatives: either to give up all direct connection with the stage, and to write dramatic poems for the book market and the library—as Goethe himself did in *Faust*, and after him Byron, Tennyson, Browning, Swinburne, in their dramatic pieces—or to try to make the best of that artificial and, to the Teutonic mind, uncongenial form of tragedy, which, as we have seen, was constructed by Italian and French poets, in accordance with the precepts of Aristotle. We can best trace both sides of the matter in the experiments made by Goethe and Schiller.

Goethe's constructive power increased so long as he continued to direct it towards the

acting drama; and it decreased when he severed his connection with the stage. He had begun his career as a playwright with the dramatisation of a full-blooded German story, "*Götz von Berlichingen*," Shakespeare being avowedly his guide in the treatment of it. He executed it, in the first instance, from a student's point of view; and afterwards, when it came to be acted, he was obliged to remodel it so as to make it appeal more to the immediate sensuous perceptions of the audience than to the imagination. But, manipulated in this way, the poem lost the freshness of a romance, and did not gain the full strength of a good play; which fact recalls the point made above, that the romance is rather unmanageable. After his experiences with "*Götz*," Goethe tried *Das bürgerliche Schauspiel*—the home-spun drama—in various small plays, which treated the realities of German middle-class life much as the novels of the period embodied them; and then he leaped from this narrow sphere at once, and with an enormous bound, to *Faust*—that altogether incommensurable poem—in which he threw over all connection with the actual stage, and retained only the advantages of a dramatic exposition. Goethe

after this gave himself little further trouble about acting plays; he was content with the statuesque calm of *Iphigénie*, and the just measure of artistic workmanship in *Tasso*. In his *Iphigénie in Tauris* we have a work as finished as a piece of Greek sculpture. But he was able to accomplish this only with materials ready to hand, like the Greek story. Wagner points out that, like Beethoven in the symphonies, Goethe dissected the poetic material just as Beethoven in his works dissected the melodious kernel, and reconstructed it organically; yet Goethe was unable to mould the elements of modern life into a similarly consistent form, and we find him, at various intervals, on the point of renouncing the drama altogether, and writing novels to fulfil his desire of embodying the present in some palpable shape. After having produced the sentimental novel "Werther's Leiden," he had given his attention, with true Shakespearian instinct, to the acting drama (*Goetz* and *Egmont*); thereafter, in "Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre, die Wahlverwandschaften" and the first part of Faust, he definitely severed his connection with the stage; and ultimately returned to the desultory romance in "Wilhelm

Meister's Wanderjahre," and to the dramatic poem addressed to the reader's imagination only, as in the second part of Faust.

Schiller, like Goethe, began with a dramatised story (*Die Räuber*) under the influence of Shakespeare; "home-spun" stories and political subjects (*Cabale und Liebe*, *Fiesko*, *Don Carlos*) occupied him until he arrived at the very root of these—*History*—and he exerted himself to produce a drama (*Wallenstein*) direct from historical sources. He managed to condense and colour the historical facts for stage purposes, but he was not, and could not be satisfied with the result. In his hands History ceased to be history, yet the ideal drama he aspired to was not realised. He was able to give but an abstract of history in the main parts of his play, and he had to paint a separate picture of the world surrounding his heroes. The total effect of this, his most elaborate work* led him to think that upon the modern stage, which appeals to the sensuous perceptions more than to the imagination, historical matter is difficult to deal with. Shakespeare, he thought, appealing to the spectators'

* Wallenstein is a trilogy: Wallenstein's Lager, Die Piccolomini, Wallenstein s Tod. Compare Coleridge's translation of Parts II. and III. Coleridge did not attempt Wallenstein's Camp.

imagination, might and would have given a picture of the entire Thirty Years' War in the space occupied by *Wallenstein*. After *Wallenstein*, Schiller gave his attention more and more to the antique forms; and in *Die Braut von Messina* he actually went to the length of introducing the Greek chorus and the Greek Fates. When the unsatisfactory result of his experiments led him to despair of finding salvation in a union of Greek form and mediæval story (a union symbolised by Goethe in his marriage of Helena and Faust), he sought in his last dramatic poem, *Wilhelm Tell*, to save at least his freshness as a poet, which had suffered considerably whilst he was struggling in the meshes of æsthetical speculation.

Since Schiller's time the German drama has oscillated between antique form and the novel. The poetical plays of English poets —Browning for an instance—are hardly fit to be acted; and acting plays, both English and German, though we may accredit them with all manner of virtues, are not poetical.

To students of dramatic poetry—who as a rule keep aloof from theatrical performances, and take cognizance of dramatic literature

only—it is a surprising fact, and one which they deplore, that the opera has not only absorbed the interest due to the spoken drama, but is actually detrimental in its influence on the character of theatrical performances. Actors with high aims may be pardoned for joining in the cry against the opera when they see some mediocre singer "bring down the house" with the most frivolous musical phrases, and it is scarcely fair to blame an actor if he gives way to the temptation of imitating cheap operatic effects. Few actors or playwrights, however, have cared to follow Wagner when he points out that these and the like facts do not cover the entire case, and that it offers other points of view which hold out hope for the future. We have all felt the effect of certain dramatic-musical combinations, in the operas of Mozart and in Beethoven's Fidelio; these impress deeply and firmly with an immediate vividness such as no art but music can approach.

Let the advocates of the spoken drama say what they will, the fact cannot be denied that, in the estimation of the last two or three generations of playgoers, the opera has outstripped it in public favour. "*And*

that it is more than probable that the opera contains the seed from which an ideal drama will spring up." The music of a master may lend to the performance of operatic singers of average gifts an indefinable charm, such as even the best actor cannot hope to exercise. The mysterious might of music lifts whatever it touches into a higher sphere.

If, then, the main object of the poetical career of Goethe and Schiller can be described as an attempt to find the ideal subject-matter and an ideal form for the drama; and if, as Schiller in a curious and highly interesting confession records it, the beginning of all poetical production with him was *eine musikalische Gemüthsstimmung* (a musical state of mind), which only after a time brought forth the poetical idea—pictures and words—if it is a fact sufficiently proved* that the drama of Æschylus sprang from the union of the older hymns of the Hellenic priests with the newer Dionysian dithyrambos, *i.e.* with poetry conceived in the orgiastic spirit of musical sound, we may, by analogy, conclude that from music and

* Compare Friedrich Nietzsche "*Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik*," 1872. Also Wagner "*Ueber die Bestimmung der Oper*" (On the destiny of the Opera—*same date*).

mythos combined an ideal drama will issue, which stands to the spirit of modern existence as the drama of Æschylus stood to the spirit of Greece.

This part of the subject may be concluded with a summing-up translated from Wagner's Zukunfts-musik, *Brief an einem Französischen Freund.** "Referring to the hopes and wishes so frequently expressed by great poets of attaining in the opera an ideal *genre*, I came to believe that the poet's co-operation, so decisive in itself, would be perfectly spontaneous on his part and desired by him. I endeavoured to obtain a key to this aspiration, and thought to have found it in the desire, so natural to a poet, and which in him directs both conception and form, to employ the instrument of abstract ideas—language—in a manner which would take effect on the feelings. As this tendency is already predominant in the invention of poetical subject-matter, and as only that picture of human life may be called poetical in which all motives, comprehensible to abstract reason, appear rather as motives of purely human feeling—in like manner this tendency is the only one capable of deter-

* "The Music of the Future," London, 1873.

mining the form and expression of poetical execution. In his language the poet tries to substitute the first sensuous signification of words for their abstract and conventional meaning, and, by rhythmical arrangement and the almost musical ornament of rhyme in the verse, to endow his measures with a charm which will captivate the feelings. *This tendency, essential to the poet, leads him finally to the limits of his art, where it comes into contact with music; and thus the perfect poetic work would be that which in the end would resolve itself into music.*"

IV.

Mephistopheles. "Grau, theurer Freund, ist alle Theorie,
Und grün des Lebens goldner Baum."

Goethe, "Faust," I.

HAVING traced the current of both modern music and poetry to the point at which it appears evident that both are possessed with a longing for reunion—having hailed the opera as a foreshadowing of the future drama that appeals to the heart of man rather than to his abstract understanding—and having shown that historical as well as political matter, because it cannot be made to bear the necessary condensation without becoming vague and losing its character, is unmanageable, we find ourselves inclined to agree with Wagner's assertion, that the best material for the construction of such a form is mythos, legend, folklore, fairy tale, and the like.

From this point Wagner, led by the spirit of music, takes his departure, and proceeds to demonstrate how matter of a mythical nature, the character of which, according to him, is essentially emotional, seems to

demand the language of emotion, *music*, for its proper presentation. It is, he says, the aim of the drama to present, in the most generally intelligible manner, a poetical conception of human individuals and their conflicting interests, apart from conventions, and he proceeds to solve the problem of form in detail, and to fix the relation of the various factors of his work to one another.

Here, then, the curtain should be drawn for a performance of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. That would be the proper way of making the particulars which are to follow fully intelligible; for it is difficult to consider them otherwise than as comments to that central work of Wagner's life, the emotional effect of which when it is actually performed can be the only just criterion as to their validity. For clearness' sake, it will be well to sketch the main points separately.

General Shape of the Drama.—The mythical subject-matter is simple and easily comprehensible, and does not stand in need of details. It is divided into few decisive scenes, in each of which the action arises spontaneously from the emotions of the *dramatis personæ*, which emotions, by reason of the

small number of such scenes, can be presented in a complete and exhaustive manner. In planning such scenes according to the nature of the mythical matter, it is not necessary to take any preliminary account of specific musical forms as the opera has them —arias, duets, ensemble pieces, finales—for, since the myths are in themselves emotional, and as the dramatist moulds them under the influence of the spirit of music, they resolve themselves, as it were spontaneously into *musical* diction. No phase of emotion is touched upon, in any scene, which does not stand in some relation to the emotion of the rest; so that the development of the phases of emotion and their sequence constitute the unity of expression.

Musical Form.—Each of the phases of emotion just spoken of has for its outcome some definitely marked musical expression, some characteristic theme (*Leitmotif*); and just as there is an intimate connection between the phases of emotion, so an intimate interlacing of the musical themes takes place, and spreads itself not only over an entire scene or part of a scene, but over the whole extent of the drama. The *Leitmotif* is never made use of for the

display of any purely musical combinations *per se*, but it is always closely in contact with the poet's dramatic intentions. Thus, that wondrous power by which a musician can make his phrase undergo metamorphosis after metamorphosis, without losing its character,* is here developed to a hitherto unknown extent; and the means of dramatic expression are, in consequence, greatly widened and enlarged.

Verse.—German poets have imitated and, as well as their language permits, come close to every sort of metre; but no one will deny that the definite rhythms upon which the German language prides itself so much exist far more for the reader's eye than for the hearer's ear. Take the most common form of verse Iambics—is it not torture to hear the sense of the language continually forced and twisted to suit the purposes of the metre? Sensible actors, when Iambics first came into use, were afraid of sing-song, and treated them as prose.

Italians and Frenchmen, who measure their verse by the number of syllables, have found rhyme indispensable. Now,

* Compare Beethoven Op. 110, 120, or Brahms' variations on a subject attributed to Handel, op. 22.

if we examine the relation of music to verse, we meet with the curious fact that musicians declaim Iambics, and every other species of verse, in all and every sort of time! As for the rhyme, music engulfs it — and the cases wherein the musical rhyme actually corresponds to the rhyme in the verse are for the most part accidental, or, at any rate, few and far between. A musician can do no more with Iambics than the actors did; he must treat them as prose and stretch or compress them to fit his melody.

Since modern versification offers such small attraction to a musician, Wagner was led to ask himself what sort of rhythmical speech it might be that was most intimately connected with musical diction, and the answer was not far to seek. Just as we have seen the poetical materials condensed by dramatists for their purposes, so the expressions of our daily speech may be condensed. Conventional phraseology is dropped whenever we speak under the pressure of some strong emotion; we enforce accents with a raised voice; our phrases become short and strongly rhythmical. In the early days of the Teutonic

languages, such a manner of speech had been used for artistic purposes; it is the *alliterative* verse of the *Edda* and of *Beowulf*.* The condensed form, and the close relative position of the accented vowels, give to alliterative verse great emotional intensity and render it peculiarly musical. When a poet conceives this sort of verse, he is never without some sense of *musical harmony* in connection with the melodious sound of his words. And at this point the musician, whose art enables him to give precise expression to the vaguely conceived harmonies of the poet, steps in; on the basis of musical harmony he proceeds to record the melody pertaining to the verse, and thus finally to fulfil the poet's desire for complete expression.†

Of the three opera-producing nations, the Italians, the French, and the Germans, the last alone possess an everyday speech which has an immediate and easily recognisable connection with its roots, whereas Italians and Frenchmen can only get at the radical meaning of their speech by studying the languages of antiquity.

* Compare W. Morris's version of the latter.

† Musical Harmony, be it remembered, is a Christian product.

Melody.—Wagner's melody has undergone many a metamorphosis. It is only since he was led by the nature of his subjects to adopt alliterative verse, or a combination of alliteration, assonance, and rhyme, that his manner of procedure has been finally determined. As a youth he tried to embody Schumann's maxim, "You must invent original and bold melodies"; but the more he came to derive his form of musical expression direct from romantic or mythical matter, the less he troubled himself to appear "original." In *Rienzi*, his first published opera, we find, with very little exception, Italian and French *grand opéra* phraseology *à la* Spontini. In *Der fliegende Holländer*, the story of which is legendary, the melody often approaches the folktune; it has a rhythmical backbone which that of *Rienzi* lacks. In *Tannhäuser*, and still more in *Lohengrin*, the melody starts from the sound of the verse and seems to spring and grow out of it. In both these works, it is not so much any peculiar melodic feature that attracts the listener, as the emotion expressed. The defect of modern verse—want of rhythmical precision—told upon the melody. But

Wagner managed to increase its power by characteristic harmonies. He enforced it by significant accompaniments, and so rendered it highly efficient. *Alliterative* verse gave to his melody a *rhythmical impulse.* The use of alliteration and of the melody springing from it, arose direct from the artistic instinct with which he mastered everything congenial to him, and was not in any way the result of abstract speculation. Musicians are aware of the fact that if a composer writes the accompaniments to a vocal phrase in such a manner that those vocal notes which are essential to the harmony are omitted in the instrumental portion the result is disastrous; both the vocal and the instrumental parts will sound incomplete; the ear takes special notice of each, and the colour of the voice is at all times distinct from the colour of the orchestral instruments. It is upon this fact that Wagner bases his procedure; in *Tristan und Isolde,* for instance, he very frequently means the voice part to be little else than an intensified version of the actual sounds of rhythmical speech. Wagner has described the relation of this sung melody to the "*melos of the Orchestra,*" so easy to understand if one listens to it, in an elabo-

rate simile, the main points of which are as follows :—"Let us look upon the orchestra as a mountain lake pierced to its depth by the sunlight (*i.e.* the poetical intention which moulds endless possibilities of musical harmony to its own particular purpose), the surrounding banks of which are visible from every point. From the tree-stems that grew upon the banks, a skiff was fashioned, in such a manner as to render it fit to be carried on the lake, and to cut through its waters. This skiff is the melody growing from out of the verse, sung by the dramatic singer, and supported by the surrounding waves of the orchestra. It is a skiff, totally different from the lake, yet fashioned solely with a view to float upon it. Only when it is launched upon its waves does it become alive ; supported and carried, yet going of its own will, it attracts our eyes when we glance across the lake, as though the sole purpose of the entire picture were to exhibit this particular sight."

But not only will the orchestra thus lift and balance the words. The spirit of music will reveal the innermost emotions of the *dramatis personæ*. In unison with mimetics, music will help us to understand the secret

of those subtleties and depths of feeling at which all arts except music can only hint, and which without its aid would remain inexpressible. Music will speak to the ear as the actor's movements and the expression of his features speak to the eye; it will at the very beginning of the performance put the hearer into the receptive frame of mind necessary for the dramatic pictures and actions to come, and it will recall sounds and phrases belonging to past scenes which can to some extent throw light on the present one. Lastly, it will systematically make use of its capacity for enforcing the dramatic gestures; traces of which capacity have appeared often enough in the opera, but have there been left, like mimetics generally from which they arise, in an embryonic state, scarcely above the level of the pantomime. "On the one hand, as embodied harmony, the orchestra renders the distinct expression of melody possible; whilst on the other, it keeps the melody in the necessary uninterrupted flow, and thus always displays the motives of the dramatic action to our feelings with the most convincing impressiveness."

The entire work of art intended by

Wagner is *musical* in spirit, and could have been conceived by none other than a man of universal artistic instincts, who is at the same time a great master of music. The mythical matter, chosen because of its essentially emotional nature; the division into scenes, and their sequence; the use of alliterative verse, the peculiar use of the orchestra—as preparing, supporting, commenting, enforcing, recalling—all these factors are meant to be, and in Wagner's creation are, imbued with the spirit of music. Their task is not accomplished if any one side of the subject remains to be supplied by some process of abstract reasoning on the hearer's part. They are to appeal exclusively to the emotions. The sole test of what sort of thing is to be said lies in the expressive power of music. Being emotional throughout, the musical drama for that reason stands apart from the spoken play. In Wagner's music-drama the pathos of dramatic speech is not left to the discrimination of the actor. The musician's technique fixes every accent and every inflection, and a composer ought—in the act of conducting such a drama—to be so completely in unison with the singers and players that one might talk

of an actual metempsychosis—his very soul should speak through the performers.

Before concluding this part of the subject a hope may be expressed that whoever has read so far will be in a position to see how much of the criticism and abuse of "the music of the future" is inapplicable to Wagner and his aims. His drama has nothing whatever to do with the *supposed* reform of instrumental music, "the music of the future," with which the names of Berlioz and Liszt are usually associated. Did anyone ever care to assert that the works of Mendelssohn, Schumann, and others, leave an unsatisfactory impression, owing to shortcomings in detail? In this respect it is surely impossible to see where reform is needed. The innovations in form introduced by Berlioz and Liszt in some of their instrumental works are the result of a tendency which was carried out more or less consciously by all instrumental composers who came after Beethoven; it is the desire of a *poetical basis*, a sort of "programme" for instrumental music. If such a desire be the distinctive mark, surely Chopin, Schumann, even Mendelssohn, are "musicians of the future."

Be this as it may, Wagner's ideal drama is a thing apart from any tendency towards programme-music, the contradictions of which, from its high standpoint, it disposes of with ease. From Rienzi to Lohengrin Wagner's efforts were solely directed towards a reformation of the opera. After the inception of Lohengrin—that is to say, with the Ring, Tristan, Die Meistersinger, and finally Parsifal—he went through a complete inner transformation. The opera disappears from his ken, and he produces the *music-drama.* It is new from end to end, and carries its own criterion of excellence in the high emotions a correct performance of it cannot fail to arouse.

V.

"Tempo è galantuomo."

The theatre is the centre of national culture; no art can hope to lend effectual aid towards popular culture so long as the supreme importance of the theatre is not recognised.

If the spirit of modern life, which takes its origin in the Renaissance, could succeed in producing a theatre that shall stand in relation to the innermost motives of modern culture as the Greek theatre stood to the religion of Greece, then the arts should have arrived at the same vivifying spring from which in Greece they nourished themselves.

It is principally in the drama that the limitless capacities of music for emotional expression, the width and wealth of its resources, are fully apparent; this capacity has grown in exact ratio with the extent and the dignity of the opportunities afforded to musicians by the dramatic poets; and the future prospects of music are intimately connected with those of the theatre.

These assertions, much condensed, can be taken as the *thesis* which Wagner illustrates, from different points of view, in the many smaller writings which aim at the amelioration of theatrical and musical things. There are especially two pamphlets: —"Bericht über eine in München zu errichtende Deutsche Musikschule" (Report concerning a German school of music to be established at Munich), and "Ueber das Dirigiren" (On Conducting)—both small in bulk but weighty, from which it is worth while to take a few gleanings, as in them the master's ideal is brought to bear directly upon the questions of musical practice. If we remember that it is from the high point of view of the Drama that he looks upon the musical doings of his day, we shall be more inclined to make allowance for the harshness of his criticism and the severity of his censure when dealing with incapacity or wilful perversity.

Of the two pamphlets in question, the first, 1865, is concerned with a scheme for the establishment of a school of music in Munich, the main object of which was to train dramatic singers in the direction of a correct presentation of works written in the

German language, and to establish a style for the rendering of the great German composers' works. The second, 1869, is a detailed and elaborate criticism of the mode of conducting current in Germany *circa* 1840–69, with significant hints as to its improvement.

The "school" was not intended to attempt the teaching of everything, and so end in teaching little; it was to devote itself exclusively to the attainment of *correct performances*—correct in every technical detail, and in every nuance of tone and style. The theory of harmony, counterpoint, and composition, history of music and æsthetics, even the exclusively technical side of the instructions for every particular instrument, were to be left to private tuition, under the supervision of the school authorities. It was intended to act directly upon the artistic taste and instinct of the pupils by means of constant united practice of the representative works of the great masters. There is abundant opportunity in German towns to get excellent theoretical instruction; but what young musicians there require above all things, is a practical knowledge of the laws of beautiful and correct phrasing, *i.e.* style, and this the school was to cultivate.

That a knowledge of the laws of correct delivery should be to some extent wanting to their performances is a truth which German instrumentalists, and especially singers, do not like to hear, but the sense of which has, once and again, been rather roughly brought home to them in Paris and in London. There are many German singers who deserve to be called good musicians; they usually know more about music in general than their Italian or French brethren; they possess good voices too; yet they "cannot sing."* The real cause of this, as of so many other practical shortcomings (and here is the point to which Wagner is ever returning) lies in the fact that Germany has never been in possession of a *representative musical* theatre—a theatre which, acting upon the national taste, and in its turn acted upon by the nation, should have developed a style of execution, such as would reflect the spirit which animates the German poets and composers. The conservatoires of Naples, Milan, and Paris preserved and fostered the styles which had been developed by the artists of San Carlo, La Scala, and L'Académie de Musique, with the co-operation of the Italian and French public.

* What is asserted here refers to *circa* 1860–70.

But the German theatres having to cater for a public of *bourgeois* subscribers who require constant change of diet, do not and cannot subsist on any speciality of their own ; they put forth every conceivable thing, from Sophocles to Offenbach. And such pieces, indifferently translated, are generally executed without any attempt at consistency of style.

It was objected that a Conservatorium need not trouble itself about Italian or French productions. "Let them go their ways—and let it conserve the proper tradition concerning Gluck and Mozart!"

Yes, but there is a difficulty! German dramatic works, such as those of Gluck and Mozart, must be studied with a view to French and Italian peculiarities of style ; German singers have no more mastered these peculiarities than those of other works by entirely foreign composers. If the works of Gluck and Mozart have ever been properly performed in Germany, they certainly are not so performed now ; and if proof were needed of the helplessness of the present race of operatic performers, one could not point to a more melancholy sight than their life-

less and colourless representations of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and Gluck's *Iphigénie.**

It has also been objected that the real centre of musical life in Germany lies in the concert-room and not in the theatre. This may be admitted, but it cannot be denied that all the efforts made by concert-conductors with a view to directing the taste of the public towards the best have been again and again disturbed by the proximity of the theatrical marsh. *If nobler and higher tastes are to be effectively engrafted*, there is but one way, and that is to *raise the quality and the character of theatrical performances*. The Munich institution was to prepare the *personnel* for a theatre in which the performances should be correct, and typically German. Instruction in singing was to be made a *sine quâ non* for every pupil of the school. In developing a German style of singing, the peculiarities of the language, its short and often dull vowels, its clotted consonants, its gutturals and sibilants must be taken into account. For this reason, the prominent feature of a German style, as opposed to the long-drawn vocalism of the

* Compare, also, Wagner, Ueber Schanspieler und Sänger (on Comedians and Singers), 1872.

Italian style, will consist in an energetic accentuation akin to actual speech ; obviously a kind of singing well adapted to dramatic delivery. When Wagner speaks of energetic accents, he does not mean to sacrifice the beauty of sound pertaining to the Italian method. The *cursus* was to combine the study of Italian singing in the Italian language with German. Besides general instruction in instrumental technique — harmony, counterpoint, and composition, rhetoric and mimetics were to be added to the vocal studies, so that in time the school for singing might completely fulfil all the conditions necessary to the preparation of its pupils for the lyric stage. The pianoforte, and its literature, so important to musicians, were to receive due attention not only from those who wished to become expert players, but also from such as intended to devote themselves to composing and conducting. Finally, to give the tendencies of the school a chance to spread more rapidly, a journal written by the masters, in which the novel tasks and problems emanating therefrom should be discussed, was to be published.

What has become of the school ? It was started, and promised wonders. It has not

kept its promise since Wagner, and after him Hans v. Bülow, left Munich.

A few points only can be selected from the rich store of practical hints contained in the pamphlet On Conducting (*Ueber das Dirigiren*).

A taste for classical compositions cannot accrue unless a true style for their execution be developed. The public accepts great works much more on authority than by reason of any emotional impression which the customary performances of them can produce. Take a single example—Mozart's symphonies—notice two points: the vocal nature of the themes (in which respect they differ from and are superior to Haydn's) and the sparse indications in the scores for the proper execution. It is known how hurriedly Mozart wrote his symphonies—generally for performance at some concert he was about to give—and how exacting he was as regards expression when rehearsing the orchestra. It is evident that the success of the performance depended in great measure upon the master's verbal admonitions; and it is within the experience of every musician that even in our days a word from the conductor is more efficacious

than written signs. Now, it is considered "classical" by nine conductors out of ten in Germany and elsewhere, scrupulously to avoid all nuances of expression not expressly indicated in the score! And what becomes of Mozart's melodies under such treatment? Mozart, who was imbued with the spirit of Italian singing, whose great merit it is to have transplanted its expressive inflections into the orchestra—what becomes of his themes if they are delivered without increase or decrease of tone and without the delicate modifications of *tempo* and rhythm so indispensable to singers? —what becomes of them if they are played smoothly and neatly like a lesson in school?

Beethoven's orchestral works are in a different, though not in a much better plight. His scores contain ample directions for correct execution; still the difficulty of rendering his symphonies properly is greater inasmuch as his thematic combinations are more elaborate than Mozart's. New difficulties arise through the peculiar use Beethoven makes of his rhythms; and to fix the proper *tempo* for his symphonic movements, above all the ever-present delicate and expressive *modification* of this tempo, without which the sense of

many an eloquent phrase remains incomprehensible, is a task requiring artistic instincts for which the typical German Kapellmeister is not as a rule remarkable.* The lively applause with which very lifeless performances of Mozart's and Beethoven's symphonies are wont to meet with would be incomprehensible if it were not for the fact that most people owe their love for these works to private study of pianoforte arrangements, so that when they listen to the orchestra they are already familiar with both themes and treatment, and the only addition to their conception is the brilliancy of orchestral colour.

The demand for continual though scarcely perceptible modifications of tempo, such as inevitably ensue when music is executed in connection with a dramatic performance, forms the essence of Wagner's pamphlet. He wishes to see the *nuances* of tempo suggested by his dramatic instinct applied to pure instrumental music; and it is curious to note how the results of this procedure chime with the descriptions that have come down to us of the greatest musicians' manner of playing their works, and of improvising—

* See the footnote on p. 67.

for instance, Schindler's or Czerny's account of Beethoven's rendering of his sonatas and symphonies, and of his improvisations.

Conductors often miss the proper tempo because they are ignorant of the art of singing, for it is only after you have correctly caught the *melos* (melodious phraseology) of a movement that you have found the *right tempo*. The two are inseparable; one implies the other. Older musicians usually confined themselves to very general indications of tempo; the two extremes, *allegro*, *adagio;* and *andante*, to denote the medium between them. J. S. Bach, in most cases, gave no hints whatever, and this, from the esoteric musical point of view, was right. Bach may have said to himself:—"If a man does not understand my themes and their treatment, if his instinct does not lead him to feel their character, what can he be expected to make of any tentative designation of tempo?"

The *tempo adagio* stands opposed to the *tempo allegro*, as the sustained tone to the animated movement (*figurirte Bewegung*). In the *tempo adagio*, as we have it in Beethoven, the sustained tone furnishes the laws of movement. One might say, in a certain delicate sense, of the pure *adagio*, that it

cannot be taken too slowly. Here the sustained tone speaks for itself; the smallest change of harmony is surprising, and the most remote progressions are at once understood by our expectant feelings. Beethoven's *allegro* can be looked upon, also in a certain delicate sense, as the result of a combination of the emotional *adagio* with *animated movement* (*bewegtere Figuration*). In Beethoven's greatest Allegro movements some large melody generally predominates, which in character is akin to the Adagio, and which gives to these movements a certain *sentimental* colour (in the best sense of the word) that clearly distinguishes them from the earlier naïve sort of allegro. Take, for example, the opening melody of the Sinfonia Eroica or of the great Trio in B flat. The exclusive character of the *naïve allegro* is not felt until much later in the course of these pieces, when the rhythmical movement gets the upper hand of the sustained tone. The best specimens of the naïve allegro are to be found in Mozart's *alla breve* movements, such as the allegros of the overtures—notably Figaro and Don Giovanni. "In pieces of this character, of which Beethoven too furnishes specimens, like the Finale of his symphony in A major,

the rhythmical movement has it all its own way—celebrates its orgies, as it were ; and it is impossible to take these pieces too quickly, or with too much decision. But whatever lies between the two extremes is akin, and must therefore be co-ordinated ; and such co-ordination requires as many and as delicate combinations of tempo as the nuances and inflections of which the sustained tone is capable."

We find in Beethoven's sentimental Allegro all the separate peculiarities of the older Allegro, the sustained tone and the arpeggio, the vocal portamento and the animated movement, so fused as to make an inseparable and unique musical tissue ; and it is certain that the mass of varied materials he uses for his symphonic movements must be rendered in accordance with their respective nature, if the whole is not to make an impression of monstrosity. Wagner relates how in his youth he had often found older musicians in the act of shaking their heads over the Sinfonia Eroica. Dionys Weber, for example,* who was director of the conservatorium at Prague, treated it altogether as a nonentity. Herr Weber cared for nothing

* Wagner's friend and patron (1832).

beyond the Mozartian naïve allegro; and "whoever heard the pupils at his school play the first movement of the Eroica under his direction and in the strict tempo proper to the Mozartian allegro was certainly constrained to agree with him." In continuation, Wagner asks, have we, since, improved much upon Herr Weber's mode of procedure?

In connection with his assertion, that as regards *tempo* everything depends upon the executants understanding the melodic phraseology of a piece, Wagner goes on to show how great a risk conductors run who suddenly expect their orchestra to play a piece in a tempo differing from the supposed "traditional one." The deplorable fact, he asserts, is that a mode of playing, which may be described as "a careless gliding over things," has become habitual in Germany and elsewhere. And this assertion is closely connected with the incorrect Tempi usually taken for certain movements—*e.g.* the third movement of Beethoven's 8th Symphony, which, though expressly marked Tempo di Minuetto, is almost invariably served up as a sort of Scherzo.*

"Nothing is less familiar to German

*Not so now, 1904.

orchestras than the production of *a long-sustained tone with unflagging strength.* Ask any orchestral instrument for a full, equal, and sustained *forte,* and the player will be astonished at the unusual demand! *Yet this equally-sustained tone is the basis of all musical dynamics*—as with singing so with orchestral playing." Without this basis an orchestra will produce much noise but no *power.* But our conductors think very highly of an *over-delicate piano,* which the strings produce without the slightest trouble, but which for the wind and especially the wood wind instruments, is difficult. The players on these latter, particularly flute players, who have to transform their instruments, formerly so soft, into "forcible tubes," find a sustained *piano* nearly impossible—with perhaps the exception of French oboists, who have not altered the pastoral character of their instrument, or of clarinetists, if you ask them for the "echo effect."

Now the discrepancies between the *piano* of the wind and that of the strings often escape the observation of conductors. It is the character of the *piano* of the strings which is in a great measure at the bottom of the evil, for we are as much

without a *proper piano* as we are without a *proper forte; both lack fulness of tone.* The violinists, who find it so easy to draw their bows over the strings so as to produce a whispering vibration, might copy the full-toned *piano* from competent wind instrument players. Players of wind instruments, again, might gain by imitating the *piano* of great singers. For the full *piano* and sustained *forte* are the two poles of orchestral sound between which all execution should move. Together with the properly sustained tempo they form the elements of a correct style for the execution of instrumental music.

In the face of all these troubles, one cannot shrink from the confession that there is serious danger in advocating *modification of tempo.* Are we to allow any man who wags a stick to do as he chooses with the *tempi* of our glorious instrumental music? May he "make effects" in Beethoven's symphonies as his fancy dictates? To such a question there is probably no answer, unless it be, 'Tis a pity men should occupy positions they are not fit for.

"On Conducting" contains many examples in musical type; amongst others, a number

of details concerning the interpretation of the overtures to *Der Freischütz* and *Die Meistersinger*, Beethoven's 3rd, 5th, 8th, and 9th Symphonies, etc.

Concerning this pamphlet, and in fact concerning *all* Wagner's writings, we may repeat the words of the ghostly voice that was heard by St. Augustine: *Tolle, lege*—take and read.

VI.

"Natura lo fece e poi ruppe lo stampo."
Ariosto.

WAGNER has become a European celebrity in spite of himself—for to those who believe in him and in the destiny of his works there is nothing more humiliating than the fact that the interest excited by his name is not one derived from his works, but rather from his personality.* Out of Germany his reputation rests on his mistakes of policy. "*Il a les défauts de ses vertus.*"

Certain words of Schopenhauer throw light on the situation: "All great theoretical feats of whatever sort are achieved by means of so powerful, firm, and exclusive a concentration of their author's mind towards one particular object, that for the time being all the rest of the world disappears completely, and the one object becomes the sole reality to him. This great and forcible concentration, which is one of the special privileges of genius, is by no means rare even in the presence of ordinary things,

* Again *circa* 1870.

and in the affairs of daily life; and under such a focus these latter are often enormously exaggerated. It is for this reason that highly-gifted persons are rendered sad, gay, thoughtful, timid, angry, by things which would not affect an ordinary mortal. For this reason also genius is wanting in sobriety, in the power of seeing in things, at least as far as his personal aims are concerned, nothing beyond what is contained in them. How much common sense, quiet composure, entire serenity, and evenness of conduct a man of ordinary capacity exhibits in comparison with a man of genius! Yet it is the latter, so frequently sunk in dreams, or excited by passion, from whose restless anguish immortal works spring forth. Almost invariably Genius stands in queer relation to the surrounding world, for its very strivings and doings are in opposition to and at war with the age. Men of talent always appear at the proper time; they are moved by the spirit of their age and called forth by its requirements; they are able to satisfy these and no more; they take their share in the course of contemporaneous development, or by their help some special science advances a step or two; they reap rewards and

gain due applause. But to the next generation their works are no longer palatable, and must be replaced by others, which again in their turn do not last. Genius, on the contrary, flashes upon the times like a comet upon the planets' orbits, to the well-regulated and visible order of which its completely eccentric course is quite alien; it cannot chime in with the course of regular development of the age, but it throws its works out far ahead, where time alone can overtake them. Its relation to the men of talent, whose career culminates in the meanwhile, is well expressed in the words of the evangelist —'My time is not yet come, but your time is always ready.'"

A few biographical data which serve as landmarks in Wagner's career may be appended here.

Wilhelm Richard Wagner was born 22nd May, 1813, at Leipzig. His father, an *actuarius* of police, died six months after, and the widow was re-married to Ludwig Geyer, actor, portrait painter, and author of comedies, who also died early—when Richard was seven years of age. It had been Geyer's intention to bring up the boy as a painter, but he proved awkward at drawing and pianoforte playing,

in which he had a few lessons. The teacher caught him "hammering at tunes from the overture to *Der Freischütz* with monstrous fingering" and pronounced him a hopeless case; which dictum has since proved right enough, for Wagner to the end of his days continued to play the piano in a manner peculiar to himself. The fact that he was *not* an infant phenomenon is nowise surprising if the strange nature of his gifts be considered.

Music, though he was enthusiastic about it, was but an accessory to Wagner's early studies, Greek, Latin, mythology, and ancient history being the main subjects at the Dresden Kreuzschule which he attended with a view to the usual university career. He was given to poetising, projected tragedies and passed muster in the school for a clever fellow *in literis*. He learnt sufficient English to read bits of Shakespeare and to translate them in metre. He projected a tragedy, which he describes as a concoction made up of *Hamlet* and *King Lear*, on an absurdly grand scale. Forty-two men died in the course of it, and he was obliged to make a number of them return as ghosts, so as to keep the last acts sufficiently stocked. This

production occupied him for two years; he left Dresden while it was still progressing and returned to Leipzig, where, at the *Gewandhaus* concerts, he first received impressions from the instrumental works of Beethoven and Mozart; and, in imitation of Beethoven's *Egmont*, he attempted to add music to his play. When this play was found to have led him to neglect his philological studies, there was, as is usual in such cases, a big family quarrel. But he was not to be stopped; he wrote overtures for grand orchestra, a sonata, a quartet. One overture, which he describes as the culminating point of his musical absurdities, was performed and ridiculed at the Leipzig Theatre. Whilst he was a student at the University of Leipzig, he went through a course of contrapuntal studies with Theodor Weinlig, then cantor at the Thomas-schule, and an excellent musician, which laid a solid foundation for his musical future. Under the supervision of Weinlig, he wrote a considerable number of pieces, amongst which a symphony and several overtures are mentioned. One of the overtures was performed at the *Gewandhaus* concerts with encouraging success — and the symphony was well received both at

Prague and Leipzig. Mozart and Beethoven, especially the latter, for whose works he had at that time already a passionate admiration, were his models. "It may be doubted whether there was ever a young musician who knew Beethoven's works more thoroughly than Wagner in his eighteenth year. The overtures and symphonies he copied in score. He went to sleep with the sonatas and rose with the quartets—he sang the songs and whistled the concertos (for his pianoforte playing was never of the best)—in short, he was possessed with a *furor teutonicus*, which, added to a good education and a rare mental activity, promised to bring forth rich fruit." * In 1833 he was at Würzburg, composing an opera in three acts, *Die Feen*, for which he had contrived a libretto after Gozzi's *Woman-Snake*, and conducting the chorus at the theatre. His next opera, *Das Liebesverbot*, after Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, was finished while he was conducting at Magdeburg, and performed in 1836, after hardly twelve days' preparation, with *nil* for a result. Soon after this the Magdeburg manager failed, and Wagner, encumbered with debts, took the con-

* H. Dorn.

ductorship at Königsberg. There, in 1836, he married, and composed an overture, "Polonia," and "Rule Britannia," which, in his own words, "was also a sort of overture." In 1837, at Riga, he began sketching the five-act tragic opera, *Rienzi*, the first of his dramatic works that has gained acceptance in Germany. Its libretto, based on Bulwer's novel, is planned on a very large scale so that it is suitable for the largest theatres only. With the music to two acts of it finished, he left Riga, and started in 1839, without funds or friends, and without a definite plan of action, for Paris. At Boulogne he made Meyerbeer's acquaintance, who, on seeing the score of *Rienzi*, furnished him with letters of introduction to certain notabilities of the Parisian musical and theatrical world. In consequence of these letters, things looked bright for a little time, but Wagner soon found that to gain a hearing in Paris without the aid of influential friends on the spot (Meyerbeer did not stay there for any length of time during the two years of Wagner's sojourn) was a task beyond even his energy. When things looked particularly gloomy he took to writing articles

for Schlesinger's *Gazette Musicale*, and making arrangements of operas—Halévy's *La Reine de Chypre*, Donizetti's *La Favorita*, for the pianoforte and other instruments. Some of the articles, into which he threw a good deal of his personal experience, "Das Ende eines deutschen Musikers in Paris," or of his *then* paradoxical opinions and fantastic aspirations, "Eine Pilgerfahrt zu Beethoven," made a considerable impression. About this time the text-book to *Der fliegende Holländer* was written, and the music to it executed in the short space of seven weeks. There is a story current about this opera, to the effect that it was submitted to the director of the Grand Opéra, Léon Pillet, and was rejected "on account of the miserable quality of the music," which ought to be corrected. The fact is that Wagner for a long time was led to expect he might receive an order to compose an opera, and had handed in a sketch of *Der fliegende Holländer*. But the director procrastinated from month to month, until a friend informed Wagner that his sketch had been put into the hands of a professional librettist. Then, not to be entirely swindled, he thought it best to sell his

versified rendering of the sketch outright, and to let a musician appointed by Pillet (called Dietsch) maltreat it at his discretion. In the meanwhile he pleased himself by setting it to music in his own way. Giving up all hopes of Paris, he sent the score of *Rienzi* to Dresden. After some delay it was accepted, performed with immense success at the Court Theatre in 1842, and Wagner, who had followed it to Dresden, found himself of a sudden the most popular man in Saxony, and the King's Hofcapellmeister. On the 2nd of January, 1843, *Der fliegende Holländer* followed *Rienzi* at Dresden.

That part of Wagner's career which is of universal interest commences with *Der fliegende Holländer*, and it would be a fascinating task to trace, through *Tannhäuser*, *Lohengrin*, *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, *Tristan und Isolde*, *Die Meistersinger*, and *Parsifal*, the gradual change or expanse of his artistic practice. Here a few dates must suffice. *Tannhäuser* was completed and performed at Dresden in 1845. *Das Liebesmahl der Apostel*, a large Biblical Scena for male voices and orchestra, and *Lohengrin*, were finished in 1847; and before the revolutionary movement of 1849 the poem of *Die Meistersinger*

(which was originally intended to form a sort of comical pendant to *Tannhäuser*) and of *Siegfrieds Tod* (now called *Götterdämmerung*) were written. The disturbances, in which Wagner took active part with written and spoken addresses, put an end to the connection with Dresden; he fled, and found refuge in Zürich. During the next ten years his public appearances (a few concerts excepted — for instance, the eight concerts of the London Philharmonic Society, in the season of 1855) were those of a writer on musical æsthetics. "Die Kunst und die Revolution," "Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft," and "Oper und Drama" appeared in 1849, 1850, and 1851 respectively. During his stay at Zürich the poem of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, consisting of *Das Rheingold, Die Walküre, Siegfried, Götterdämmerung*—which, of all his works, is the largest, and forms the centre-piece of his endeavours as poet-musician—was finished. The music was completed in 1874, and first performed in its entirety at Bayreuth in 1876. In 1857, also, the poem of *Tristan* was begun, and the music to it finished two years later, during a prolonged stay at Venice. Towards the end of 1859 Wagner went to Paris, and in

February, 1860, gave three concerts there. On the 13th of March, 1861, *Tannhäuser* was produced at the Grand Opéra, and hooted off the stage by members of the Jockey Club. In 1863, he appeared at Vienna, Prague, Leipzig, St. Petersburg, Moscow, etc., conducting orchestral concerts ; and in May, 1864, King Ludwig II. called him to Munich, where in 1865 *Tristan*, in 1868 *Die Meistersinger*, in 1869 *Das Rheingold*, in 1870 *Die Walküre* (the latter two without the composer's co-operation), were first performed. In August, 1870, he was married a second time, to Cosima von Bülow, *née* Liszt. *Parsifal* came out in 1882. Wagner died at Venice on February 13th, 1883.

A LIST OF

RICHARD WAGNER'S WORKS THAT HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED.

I.—MUSICAL WORKS.

(*a*) FOR THE STAGE :

Die Feen, a romantic opera in three acts.

Rienzi, der letzte der Tribunen. First performed under Wagner, 1842, Dresden.

Der fliegende Holländer. First performed under Wagner, 1843, Dresden.

Tannhäuser. First performed under Wagner, 1845, Dresden.

(The French Edition, Paris, 1861, contains the opening scenes, Act I., re-written and enlarged for the Grand Opéra, as well as many lesser modifications, owing, in part, to the exigencies of the French language.)

Lohengrin. First performed under Liszt, 1850, Weimar.

Tristan und Isolde. First performed under Bülow, 1865, Munich.

Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg. First performed under Bülow, 1868, Munich.

Der Ring des Nibelungen. Ein Bühnenfestspiel :

1. Das Rheingold. (Attempted 1869, at Munich.)
2. Die Walküre. (Attempted 1870, at Munich.)
3. Siegfried.
4. Götterdämmerung. The entire work first performed at Bayreuth, 1876, under Wagner's supervision. Conductor, Hans Richter.

Parsifal, Ein Bühnenweihfestspiel. First performed at Bayreuth, 1882. Conductor, Hermann Levi.

(*b*) For Chorus and Orchestra :

An Webers Grabe. Dresden, 1844 (on occasion of the burial of Weber's remains, which had been brought from London.)

Das Liebesmahl der Apostel. Eine Biblische Scene. Dresden, 1847. Male chorus and orchestra.

(*c*) Orchestral Pieces :

Eine Faustouvertüre. 1839. Rewritten 1855.

Huldigungsmarsch. 1869. Originally scored for a military band. The score for the usual concert orchestra was begun by Wagner and finished by Raff.

Kaisermarsch. 1871.

Close to Gluck's overture *Iphigénie en Aulide.*

Siegfried Idyl. 1870. Published 1877.

Centennial (Philadelphia) march, 1876.

(*d*) Songs :

"Carnevalslied," from an unpublished opera, "Das Liebesverbot." 1835–36.

Les deux Grenadiers. Paris, 1839.

"Dors mon Enfant." Paris, 1839.
Mignonne. Paris, 1839.
Attente. Paris, 1839.
} Republished, with a German translation, 1871.

Fünf Gedichte. 1860.
1. Der Engel. 2. Stehe still. 3. Im Treibhaus.
4. Schmerzen. 5. Träume.
Kraft-Liedchen. 1871.

(*e*) PIANOFORTE PIECES:
Sonata, B flat. 1832.
Polonaise, four hands. 1832.
Album Sonata in E flat. 1853.
Albumblatt in E flat. 1853.
Albumblatt in C. 1861.
Albumblatt, "Gruss an die schwarzen Schwäne," in A flat. 1897.
Albumblatt in E flat. (Zürich, 1857.)

B. — LITERARY WORKS.

(Collected and Authorised Edition in ten volumes.)

1. Autobiographische Skizze (up to 1842).
Das Liebesverbot. Bericht ueber eine erste Opernaufführung. This is an extract from an unpublished autobiography, which reaches up to the time of Wagner's second marriage.
Rienzi, der letzte der Tribunen.
Ein deutscher Musiker in Paris. Novellen und Aufsätze (1840-41).
1. Eine Pilgerfahrt zu Beethoven.
2. Ein Ende in Paris.
3. Ein glücklicher Abend.
4. Ueber deutsches Musikwesen.
5. Der Virtuos und der Künstler.
6. Der Künstler und die Öffentlichkeit.
7. Rossini's *Stabat Mater*.
Ueber die Ouvertüre.
Der Freischütz in Paris.
1. Der Freischütz. An das Pariser Publikum.
2. *Le Freyschütz*. Bericht nach Deutschland.
Bericht ueber eine neue Pariser Oper (*La reine de Chypre*) von Halévy.
Der fliegende Holländer.
} 1839-41.

2. Tannhäuser und der Sängerkrieg auf der Wartburg.

Bericht ueber die Heimbringung der sterblichen Ueberreste. Karl Maria von Weber's aus London nach Dresden. 1844.

Rede an Weber's letzter Ruhestätte.

Gesang nach der Bestattung. As to the music, see above.

Bericht ueber die Aufführung der neunten Symphonie von Beethoven im Jahre 1846, nebst Programm dazu.

Lohengrin.

Die Wibelungen. Weltgeschichte aus der Sage. 1848.

Der Nibelungenmythus. Als Entwurf zu einem Drama. 1848.

Siegfrieds Tod.

Trinkspruch am Gedenktage des 300 jährigen Bestehens der königlichen musikalischen Kapelle in Dresden.

Entwurf zur Organisation eines deutschen Nationaltheaters für das Königreich Sachsen. 1849.

3. Die Kunst und die Revolution. 1849.

Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft. 1850.

" Wieland der Schmiedt," als Drama entworfen.

Kunst und Klima. 1850.

Oper und Drama. 1851.

Erster Teil: Die Oper und das Wesen der Musik.

4. Zweiter Teil: Das Schauspiel und das Wesen der dramatischen Dichtkunst.

Dritter Teil: Dichtkunst und Tonkunst im Drama der Zukunft.

Eine Mitteilung an meine Freunde. 1851.

5. Ueber die "Goethestiftung." Brief an Franz Liszt. 1851.

Ein Theater in Zürich. 1851.

Ueber musikalische Kritik. Brief an den Herausgeber der "Neuen Zeitschrift für Musik." 1852.

Das Judentum in der Musik. 1852.

Erinnerungen an Spontini.

Nachruf an L. Spohr und Chordirektor W. Fischer. 1860.

Gluck's Ouvertüre zu "Iphigénie in Aulis." 1854.

Ueber die Aufführung des "Tannhäuser."

Bemerkungen zur Aufführung der Oper: Der fliegende Holländer.

Programmatische Erläuterungen:

1. Beethoven's "Heroische Symphonie."
2. Ouvertüre zu "Coriolan."
3. Ouvertüre zum "Fliegenden Holländer."
4. Ouvertüre zum "Tannhäuser."
5. Vorspiel zu "Lohengrin."

Ueber Franz Liszt's Symphonische Dichtungen.

6. Der Ring des Nibelungen. Ein Bühnenfestpiel.
   Vorabend: Das Rheingold.
   Erster Tag: Die Walküre.
   Zweiter Tag: Siegfried.
   Dritter Tag: Götterdämmerung.

Epilogischer Bericht ueber die Umstände und Schicksale, welche die Ausführung des Bühnenfestspiels "Der Ring des Nibelungen," bis zur Veröffentlichung der Dichtung desselben begleiten.

7. Tristan und Isolde.

Brief an Berlioz. 1860.
"Zukunftsmusik." 1864.
Bericht ueber die Aufführung des "Tannhäuser" in Paris. 1861.
Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg.
Das Wiener Hofoperntheater. 1863.

8. Gedicht an Ludwig II., König von Bayern.
Ueber Staat und Religion.
Einladung zur Aufführung des Tristan in München.
Erinnerungen an Ludwig Schnorr von Carolsfeld.
Bericht ueber eine in München zu errichtende Musikschule. 1865.
Deutsche Kunst und deutsche Politik. 1868.
Censuren.

1. W. H. Riehl.
2. Ferdinand Hiller.
3. Erinnerungen an Rossini.
4. Studie ueber den Schreibestyl der "Jetztzeit."
5. Brief an Frau M. v. M.

Ueber das Dirigiren. 1870.
Drei Gedichte.

1. Rheingold.
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